

Date: Friday, May 23, 2003 9:32:32 AM

Topic: Media and News

The framers were clear about the role of journalism in a democratic society. An informed citizenry is essential to the day-to-day operation of our country's civic and economic systems. Whether voting on a local school levy, attending a re-zoning forum, buying stock in a publicly traded company or voting as a shareholder in that company, an objective survey of the facts is a growing rarity. Story editors, executive producers, managers and owners in media companies are increasingly driven by economic concerns -- concerns that put them in conflict with objective coverage of the news. When Michael Eisner says that ABC news shouldn't cover Disney, as honorable as those intentions may be, he has insured that some coverage, at some point, no matter how important to the public interest, may not be appropriate. This is not journalism.

I am a business owner and not the least bit anti-business, however business is in conflict with journalism already. When my local FOX news broadcast leads with the box office performance for a new FOX Entertainment film or spends a full third of its nightly hour covering FOX's American Idol, there is a clear conflict. More importantly by allowing or perhaps encouraging a severely subjective journalistic delivery (with a disapproving shake of the head or editorial snipe after the story), these opinion leaders skew thousands of viewers perspectives every night. The journalistic precept of "what the public has the right to know" has been hijacked by many media outlets to justify coverage of "what the viewers/readers demand". This rationale taken to one not-so-farfetched conclusion could cast Joe McCarthy and his House Committee on Un-American Activities as a reality show and then justify dedicating huge portions of news programming to its sensational appeal.

This kind of intentional and even unintentional propaganda structure is not a far cry from the machines put in place by Stalin, Hitler, Hussein (and McCarthy) in the name of their own righteous causes. When will we stop pretending that it can't happen (again) in America?

Capitalism is not interchangeable with Democracy. As with the branches of our government, these systems work together but are independent and must provide checks and balances. Justifying legislation that erodes the guarantee of an informed citizenry - in the name of capitalism - is a slippery slope upon which our freedom will find no purchase.

Topic: Response to NewsCentral

News Central

Your mindless regurgitation of propaganda casting a "village" as metaphor for the state is disrespectful and cynical. The country you claim to be loyal to was itself built on the concept of the village: cooperation, contribution and hard work to create a stronger freedom for each individual. The stakes are higher than you can possibly know given the game you play. This is NOT a hockey game where the biggest thug bullies his way to some sort of political championship. It concerns a land of hope and promise that is supposed to embrace freedom and diversity. Yet you argue in the name of protecting taxpayers against welfare and big government without the slightest clue you are really protecting your own lifestyle. Your strings are showing. The question is... who is pulling them? Your association with a news cast should prove to most viewers that the idea of a liberal media is a lie. The people most vulnerable to your simpleton's verse each night, are those least equipped to dissect it and uncover it's unholy roots. I can imagine you replying...that's their problem!

Please do not reprint this other than in it's entirety.

Thank you,

-Martin Vian

1 a :a settlement usually larger than a hamlet and smaller than a town **b**:an incorporated minor municipality

2:the residents of a village

3:something (as an aggregation of burrows or nests) suggesting a village

4:a territorial area having the status of a village especially as a unit of local government